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GOVERNOR

State of Louisiana
Governor's Office of Homeland Security
and
Emergency Preparedness

KEVIN DAVIS
DIRECTOR

January 30, 2015

Dr. Thomas Frieden, Director
U.S. Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road
Atlanta, GA 30333

Dear Dr. Frieden:

As you are aware, in November 2014, two non-human primates in the breeding colony at the Tulane National Primate Research center (TNPRC) became ill and one died. Pathology samples were submitted to the CDC which identified *Burkholderia pseudomallei* (BP) as the causative agent. This strain of bacteria is not endemic in the US but was the subject of research at TNPRC. Because BP is a tier 1 agent and the material was considered not in containment, the CDC and USDA conducted a joint investigation of TNPRC.

Given that TNPRC is not a state facility and this is a federal investigation, we appreciate the information you and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) team of experts have provided and continue to provide to Louisiana. The ongoing investigation as well as the undeveloped mitigation activities require identifying subject matter experts in multiple federal agencies – specifically, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA), and Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS).

Louisiana is formally requesting assistance with the following:

- 1. Investigation Process and Remediation on TNPRC Compound:** We are requesting that CDC engage as primary owner of the strategic direction and investigative process with TNPRC. To this end, CDC is requested to engage directly with TNPRC with regards to the serological study(s). CDC is requested to provide technical guidance, and/or solicit guidance from appropriate agencies and sections within CDC or other members of the federal family – i.e. EPA, USDA, NIOSH, etc. As reported in the investigative brief-out on January 16th, the serological studies were intended to shed light on the history of the primates' infections and gain insight into the window of time when infection likely occurred. Outcomes would determine subsequent steps in remediation of TNPRC and the breeding colony site. Louisiana does not have subject matter experts on BP; nor do state lab facilities have the capability to test for BP. In order to maintain the integrity of a formal investigation,

we are requesting CDC's active management of the investigation and remediation process of TNPRC facility and grounds.

2. **Public Assurance to Risk of Potential Exposure:** The CDC must develop an immediate action plan to be communicated to the public. Communication and coordination among local, state and federal agencies are critical in handling environmental exposure events. To this end, we request the following:

- A. **CDC Primary Point of Contact/Project Lead:** We are requesting that CDC identify a primary coordinator for this event by February 3, 2015. The CDC Lead would be responsible for organizing the appropriate subject matter experts from the federal family – i.e. CDC, USDA, EPA, NIOSH, etc. - and thereby reduce the “shopping” for solutions and answers to the state's questions. The CDC Lead would have authority to coordinate and organize the supporting federal agencies to develop plans/responses that address complex questions that may require input and solutions from multiple federal agencies. The CDC lead would be the primary interface point with the Director of the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP), the State's Incident Command (IC) lead who has the ability to organize the local and state agencies.
- B. **Mitigation/Remediation Plans:** We are requesting the following plans with critical benchmarks and supporting timeline by February 9, 2015. The intent of these plans is to reduce – if not eliminate – the risk of BP outside the TNPRC compound and to indicate remediation steps if BP infection is indicated.
 - *Surrounding Environmental Testing Plan and Sampling* – to include environmental sampling and evaluation in the surrounding surveillance zone to include water, soil, and rodent testing and to indicate remediation if BP infection is indicated.
 - *Affected Environmental Remediation in High-Risk Area*—to perform soil remediation in area(s) identified as high-risk as soon as possible to prevent further transmission/transference.
 - *Animal Testing Plan and Sampling* – to perform risk assessment for the livestock and wildlife within a meaningful vicinity of the area; to indicate remediation if BP infection is indicated; to conduct epidemiological trace of all animals that have left TNPRC after the introduction of BP.

We understand that this remains an evolving event. Planning and response are essential to our joint responsibility to protect the health and safety of our citizens. We look forward to the immediate identification of a federal lead and timely action plan.

Sincerely,



Kevin Davis